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## Long Jackson and the Moose

By H. Mortimer Batten.

WHEN Carl Berry and his son Dan took over the trading post at Cross Creeks they had little difficulty in winning the favor of the Indians, and all went uneventfully enough till Long Jackson put in his appearance. Long Jackson was an Indian of the most objectionable type, and one had only to look into his dark brown eyes to see written there all the cruelty and craftiness of his character. He had once driven a dog team to and from Winnipeg, and at Winnipeg he had benefitted in no way by the influence of civilization. He had learnt to lie, to cheat, and to drink excessively, and these evil habits he took back into the woods—back to the lonely uplands of Cross Creeks.

It was autumn when Long Jackson first put in his appearance at the trading post, and the spring previously an Indian, with whom the Berrys were well acquainted, brought with him from the woods a bull

It happened that on the evening when Long Jackson put in his first appearance at Cross Creeks, Carl Berry was out, and Dan was alone in the store. Without a sound Long Jackson beached his canoe at the foot of the clearing, and silent in his cowhide moccasins made his way up to the store. Dan was sorting some goods at the moment when the figure of the gaunt, lean Indian appeared at the threshold.

"How do," said Dan, raising his hand in the customary salute, but the tall, ragged figure took no notice. He lurched towards the bench, and taking a second glance at him Dan saw that the man was drunk. A drunken Indian is likely to be a dangerous customer at any time, while the expression in Long Jackson's eyes warned Dan that to quarrel with this man would be the height of folly.

Long Jackson produced an empty quart bottle from his pocket and rolled it across the counter. "Hootch," he said;



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moose calf some three weeks old, and sold it to the trader for five dollars. Dan, the trader's son, then a boy of fourteen, was delighted with the new pet. A rough snake fence was soon fitted up round the clearing, and the long-nosed, straddle-legged young moose given free run of the establishment. The little creature added a new touch of interest to the place, and very soon the few travellers that passed that way learnt to look out for Unqua—as the Indians called him—while prospectors, journeying through the woods, rubbed their eyes and looked puzzled when they saw the long-legged creature grazing within a few yards of the trading post door.

Unqua possessed one great fault—he was too affectionate. Whenever Dan went into the house Unqua would try to follow, while he never seemed to benefit in any way by the constant buffetings he received for doing so. Hither and thither he would follow Dan about the clearing, uttering a strange little chirruping squeal every few yards, while his long legs seemed not only to get in his own way but in the way of everyone else.

While Unqua was small, and still obviously a baby, his clinging affection was overlooked and pardoned by the trader and Dan, but as the animal became older he grew at such an alarming rate that his lap-dog disposition became a great nuisance. Imagine an animal standing as high as a horse following you with its nose against your head as you walked about the garden, refusing to be driven away, and finally following you into the house as though it had as much right there as you yourself.

When autumn came Unqua was as strong as an ox, though having hitherto received nothing but kindness from his human companions, he no doubt never knew that such a thing as harsh treatment existed. It was Long Jackson, the Indian who enlightened him on the subject,

meaning, of course, whisky. "Fill her right up brim full." And with a tipsy gesture he slammed a wad of five dollar bills on the table.

"Sorry, John, but you've come to the wrong shop," Dan explained affably. "We don't sell hootch here. This is a trading store."

There was really no need to tell Long Jackson this. Every Indian in the country knew that the trader who sold alcohol in any form to an Indian was subject to a long term of imprisonment. To ask for drink at a trading post in so open a manner was an insult to the owners of the place, so it was clear that Long Jackson was looking for trouble.

It took some moments for Dan's reply to sink into the Indian's sodden mind, but when at length it had done so he stepped back, scowling heavily at the boy.

"You no tell me lies that sort," he threatened darkly. "You got heap hootch behind that counter. You better fork it out—quick, 'fore I break your blame young neck."

Though Dan was usually discreet enough in handling the Indians, he possessed his father's quick temper, and moreover he was by no means used to being dictated to in this manner by a red man. There was something in Long Jackson's quiet insolence that nettled him to the quick, so leaning across the counter his reply came readily enough.

"You come here asking for hootch we'll learn you pretty blame quick what you're up against," he answered hotly. "You get the other side of that door before I give you a charge of sparrow shot to take out with you."

The boy stretched out his hand for the old muzzle loader always kept in a convenient position, but ere his fingers could close upon it the Indian bounded forward, quick as a panther, and caught him by the hair. Dan was next aware